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भारत सरकार
स्वास्थ्य एवं परिवार कल्याण विभाग
स्वास्थ्य एवं परिवार कल्याण मंत्रालय
Government of India
Department of Health and Family Welfare
Ministry of Health and Family Welfare

D.O.No.Z-21020/14/2020-PH
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Dear Colleagues,

This has reference to my previous communications to you with regard to dealing with the nCoronavirus/Covid-19 challenge.

A number of measures have been taken both by Govt of India and by the States to contain Covid-19. These include dissemination of Do's & Don'ts, guidelines on wearing of masks, action on various travel advisories, implementation of protocols on surveillance, prevention of hospital infection, discharge policy, clinical management, etc.

Detailed consultation with public health experts have suggested to focus on social distancing measures as a preventive strategy to prevent and contain transmission of this disease. It was brought out that implementation of social distancing measures would have a major impact in limiting the spread and will also provide us with time to strengthen our response framework.

Accordingly, advisory/guidelines are drawn up for further action. While implementing these measures, it is important to educate the community so as to ensure their cooperation and avoid any panic. It is reiterated that these are preventive measures so as to lessen the impact of COVID-19 in the country and are temporary.

I take this opportunity to thank you and your team for the tremendous hard work that you are putting in to keep our country safe.

The advisory is enclosed for further action.

Yours sincerely,
(Preeti Sudan)

Chief Secretaries of all States/UTs

CC to ACS/Pr.Secy.(H)/Secy.(H) of all States/UTs

Encl.: as above

Advisory on Social Distancing Measure in view of spread of COVID-19 disease

Social distancing is a non-pharmaceutical infection prevention and control intervention implemented to avoid/decrease contact between those who are infected with a disease causing pathogen and those who are not, so as to stop or slow down the rate and extent of disease transmission in a community. This eventually leads to decrease in spread, morbidity and mortality due to the disease.

In addition to the proposed interventions, the State/UT Governments may prescribe such other measures as they consider necessary.

All these proposed interventions shall be in force till 31st of March, 2020. They will be reviewed as per the evolving situation.

The following interventions are proposed:

1. Closure of all educational establishments (schools, universities etc), gyms, museums, cultural and social centres, swimming pools and theatres. Students should be advised to stay at home. Online education to be promoted.
2. Possibility of postponing exams may be explored. Ongoing exams to be conducted only after ensuring physical distance of one meter amongst students.
3. Encourage private sector organizations/employers to allow employees to work from home wherever feasible.
4. Meetings, as far as feasible, shall be done through video conferences. Minimize or reschedule meetings involving large number of people unless necessary.
5. Restaurants to ensure handwashing protocol and proper cleanliness of frequently touched surfaces. Ensure physical distancing (minimum 1metre) between tables; encourage open air seating where practical with adequate distancing.
6. Keep already planned weddings to a limited gathering, postpone all non-essential social and cultural gatherings.
7. Local authorities to have a dialogue with organizers of sporting events and competitions involving large gatherings and they may be advised to postpone such events.
8. Local authorities to have a dialogue with opinion leaders and religious leaders to regulate mass gatherings and should ensure no overcrowding/at least one metre distance between people.

9. Local authorities to have meeting with traders associations and other stakeholders to regulate hours, exhibit Do's and Don'ts and take up a communication drive in market places like sabzi mandi, anaj mandi, bus depots, railway stations, post-offices etc., where essential services are provided.
10. All commercial activities must keep a distance of one meter between customers. Measures to reduce peak hour crowding in markets.
11. Non-essential travel should be avoided. Buses, Trains and aeroplanes to maximize social distancing in public transport besides ensuring regular and proper disinfection of surfaces.
12. Hospitals to follow necessary protocol related with COVID-19 management as prescribed and restrict family/friends/children visiting patients in hospitals.
13. Hygiene and physical distancing has to be maintained. Shaking hands and hugging as a matter of greeting to be avoided.
14. Special protective measures for delivery men/ women working in online ordering services.
15. Keep communities informed consistently and constantly.

Ministry of Health & Family Welfare